

# **English for Academic and Professional Purposes**

**Quarter 1 – Week 3**

## **Techniques in Summarizing Variety of Academic Text**



## *What is it?*

---

### **SUMMARIZING DEFINED**

When you underline and annotate a text, when you ask yourself questions about its contents, when you work out an outline of its structure, you are establishing your understanding of what you are reading. When you write a summary, you are demonstrating your understanding of the text and communicating it to your reader.

Summarizing is to condense a text to its main points and to do so in your own words. You should extract only those elements that you think are most important—the main idea (or thesis) and its essential supporting points, which in the original passage may have been interwoven with less important material. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.

### **WHEN TO SUMMARIZE**

There are many instances in which you will have to write a summary. You may be assigned to write a one- or two-pages summary of an article or reading, or you may be asked to include a summary of a text as part of a response paper or critique. Also, you may write summaries of articles as part of the notetaking and planning process for a research paper, and you may want to include these summaries, or at least parts of them, in your paper. The writer of a research paper is especially dependent upon summary as a means of referring to source materials. Using summary in a research paper, you can condense a broad range of information, and you can present and explain the relevance of several sources all dealing with the same subject.

You may also summarize your own paper in an introduction in order to present a brief overview of the ideas you will discuss throughout the rest of the paper.

Depending on the length and complexity of the original text as well as your purpose in using summary, a summary can be relatively brief—a short paragraph or even a single sentence—or quite lengthy—several paragraphs or even an entire paper.



# What is it?

---

## USES OF SUMMARIZING

- Reviewing a long text, speech, or video
- Writing an abstract
- Preparing notes for a study guide
- Creating an annotated bibliography
- Answering an essay question
- Writing a research paper
- Recording the results of an experiment
- Describing the plot of a fictional text or film

## QUALITIES OF A SUMMARY

A good summary should be comprehensive, concise, coherent, and independent. These qualities are explained below:

- 1. A summary must be comprehensive:** You should isolate all the important points in the original passage and note them down in a list. Review all the ideas on your list and include in your summary all the ones that are indispensable to the author's development of her/his thesis or main idea.
- 2. A summary must be concise:** Eliminate repetitions in your list, even if the author restates the same points. Your summary should be considerably shorter than the source. You are hoping to create an overview; therefore, you need not include every repetition of a point or every supporting detail.
- 3. A summary must be coherent:** It should make sense as a piece of writing in its own right; it should not merely be taken directly from your list of notes or sound like a disjointed collection of points.
- 4. A summary must be independent:** You are not being asked to imitate the author of the text you are writing about. On the contrary, you are expected to maintain your own voice throughout the summary. Do not simply quote the author; instead use your own words to express your understanding of what you have read. After all, your summary is based on your interpretation of the writer's points or ideas. However, you should be careful not to create any misrepresentation or distortion by introducing comments or criticisms of your own.



## What is it?

---

### TIPS FOR SUMMARIZING

- Highlight or underline the thesis, topic sentences, and key supporting details as you read.
- Construct an outline or concept map to help you identify the main ideas
- Start by writing the main idea.
- Review the major supporting ideas.
- Paraphrase information by putting it in your own words.
- Be brief and succinct so that your summary is accurate, but significantly shorter than the original text by covering only the most important ideas in fewer words.
- Consider your purpose and audience: How detailed do you need to be? Do you need to define terms? Are you writing for yourself or for others? If you are writing for yourself, don't worry about sentence structure.
- Present ideas in the same order that the author does.
- If the author has a point of view, explain what it is in your summary leave your opinion out of the summary unless you are required to include it.
- Provide a citation if the summary is included in a formal writing assignment or publication.

### Here is an example of an original text.

Like many anuran species worldwide, the frogs and toads of North Carolina have a difficult road ahead. Worldwide, scientists have documented drastic declines in many frog and toad populations. For many of these disappearances and declines, the exact causes are difficult to determine. In some parts of the United States, scientists have documented strange body malformations in some species. These alarming developments have prompted an increased interest in the threats facing amphibians. Many organizations have developed programs to monitor the status of frogs and toads throughout the world.

In North Carolina, loss of quality habitat is one of the greatest threats frogs and toads face. Habitat destruction and fragmentation threaten entire populations by:

- Eliminating wetland habitats necessary as breeding sites,
- Removing forested areas and other upland habitats where many species live most of the year, and
- Creating barriers between these two habitats that prevent individuals from migrating to and from breeding areas.

Scientists estimate that one-half of North Carolina's original wetlands have been lost due to urban development and conversion to cropland. Our state ranked sixth in the nation for total acres of land developed between 1992 and 1997.

Dorcas, Michael E., et al. *The Frogs and Toads of North Carolina: Field Guide and Recorded Calls*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, 2007. Print.



## What is it?

---

**Here are examples of proper summary and plagiarism of original text.**

*The yellow highlighting indicates how the wording and order have been directly copied from the original text above. Even though a citation has been provided in both cases, the example on the right side below is considered plagiarism.*

### **Plagiarized Summary**

Environmental conditions in North Carolina pose a threat to frogs and toads. According to scientists, wetland destruction has already occurred on a massive scale. The destruction of wetlands, along with forests, uplands, and migration routes, could destroy vast numbers of these species. This is not only a concern in North Carolina, as frog and toad populations are declining around the world (Dorcas 8).

### **Proper Summary**

Like most species in the world, frogs and toads have a hard road ahead. Scientists have recorded major declines in many populations of frogs and toads. In North Carolina, loss of good habitat is one of the greatest problems, caused by the elimination of wetlands, removal of forests and upland habitats, and creation of barriers that prevent migration (Dorcas 8).



# *What is it?*

---

## **TECHNIQUES IN SUMMARIZING**

### **Summarizing Shorter Texts (ten pages or fewer)**

- Write a one-sentence summary of each paragraph.
- Formulate a single sentence that summarizes the whole text.
- Write a paragraph (or more): begin with the overall summary sentence and follow it with the paragraph summary sentences.
- Rearrange and rewrite the paragraph to make it clear and concise, to eliminate repetition and relatively minor points, and to provide transitions. The final version should be a complete, unified, and coherent.

### **Summarizing Longer Texts (more than ten pages)**

- Outline the text. Break it down into its major sections—groups of paragraphs focused on a common topic—and list the main supporting points for each section.
- Formulate a single sentence to summarize the whole text, looking at the author's thesis or topic sentences as a guide.
- Write a paragraph (or more): begin with the overall summary sentence and Rewrite and rearrange your paragraph(s) as needed to make your writing clear and concise, to eliminate relatively minor or repetitious points, and to provide transitions. Make sure your summary includes all the major supporting points of each idea. The final version should be a complete, unified, and coherent.

## **STRATEGIES IN SUMMARIZING**

### **1. Magnet Summaries**

Magnet Summaries help writers expand on key terms or concepts from a reading. These “magnet” words help students organize information that becomes the basis for student created summaries (Buehl, 2001).

### **2. Journalists’ Questions**

One tried-and-true method to help writers isolate important information is the strategy journalists have traditionally used to organize their writing. Called the Journalists’ Questions or the 5 Ws and an H, these simple questions help writers identify important information about a topic. Only after the questions have been answered, can writers organize their news stories— or their summaries.

<b>Who?</b>	Who are the primary or most important characters? Who are the secondary characters? Who participated? Who is affected?
<b>What?</b>	What is the topic of the lesson? What is its significance? What is the problem? What are the issues? What happened?
<b>Where?</b>	Where did the event occur? Where is the setting? Where is the source of the problem?
<b>When?</b>	When did the event occur? When did the problem begin? When is it most important?
<b>Why?</b>	Why did the event, issue, or problem occur? Why did it develop the way it did?
<b>How?</b>	How is the lesson, problem, or issue important? How can the problem be resolved? How does it affect the participants or characters identified in the Who question?

### 3. GIST Summaries (Generating Interaction between Schemata and Text)

GIST Summaries require writers to pare down information into a 20-word summary. The process helps writer better comprehend content material.

### 4. Somebody Wanted But So

The Somebody Wanted But So strategy goes by many names, depending upon the genre or content being studied. As originally introduced by Macon, Bewell and Vogt in their 1991 booklet *Responses to Literature*, the strategy helps students understand the various plot elements of conflict and resolution. Either during reading or after reading, students complete a chart that identifies a character, the character's goal or motivation, problems that character faced, and how the character resolved (or failed to resolve) those problems. The strategy helps writers generalize, recognize cause and effect relationships, and find main ideas.

<b>Somebody</b>	<b>Wanted/Because</b>	<b>But</b>	<b>So</b>
main character or a group of people	main events or a group's motivation	the conflict or problem	the resolution of the problem

## FORMATS in SUMMARIZING

There are three (3) formats that you may use in writing summaries are idea heading, author heading, and date heading.

### 1. Idea Heading Format

In this format, the summarized idea comes before the citation.

#### Example:

**Benchmarking is a useful strategy that has the potential to help public officials improve the performance of local services (Folz,2004; Ammons,2001).** Once the practice of a city is benchmarked, it can be a guidepost and the basis for the other counterparts to improve its own.

### 2. Author Heading Format

In this format, the summarized idea comes after the citation. The author's name is connected by an appropriate reporting verb.

#### Example:

The considerable number of users of FB has led educators to utilize FB for communicating with their students (Grant, 2008; as cited in Donmus, 2010). **The study of Kabilan and Abidin (2010) shows that the students perceived FB as an online environment to expedite language learning specifically English. Donmus (2010) asserts that educational games on FB fecundate learning process and make students' learning environment more engaging.** As regards literacy, this notion reveals that FB could be used as a tool to aid individuals execute a range of social acts through social literacy implementation (ibid). **Blackstone and Hardwood (2012) suggest the facilitative strength of FB as it elicits greater achievement on collaboration among students.**

### 3. Date Heading Format

In this format, the summarized idea comes after the date when the material was published.

#### Example:

On the other hand, active participation of the citizens in development contributes to a sound and reasonable government decisions. **In their 2004 study on the impact of participatory development approach, Irvin and Stansbury argue that participation can be valuable to the participants and the government in terms of the process and outcomes of decision making.**